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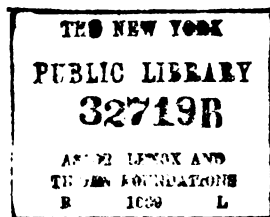
A Garland of Verse

BY
EDWIN LEIBFREED



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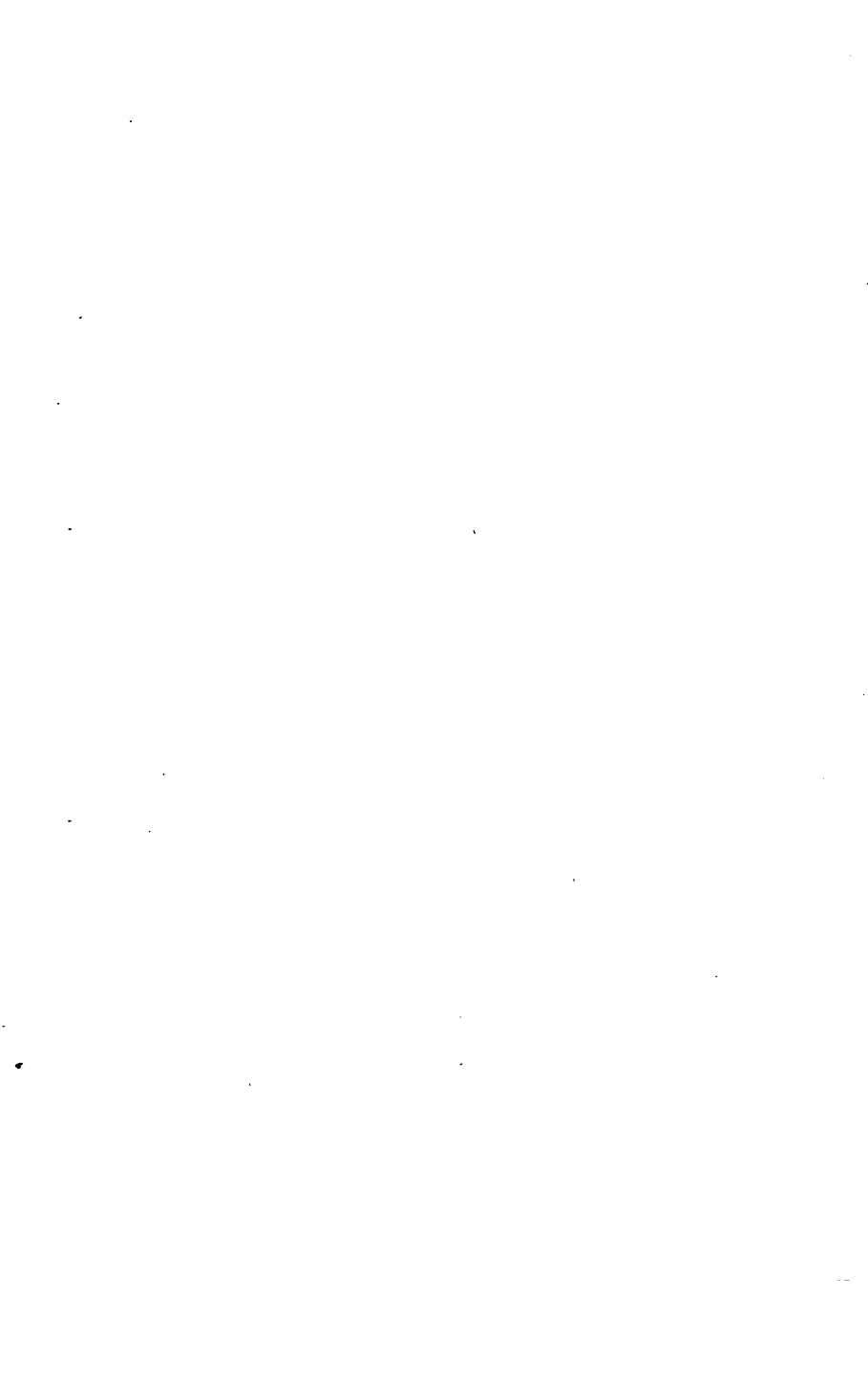
A Garland of Verse



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A Garland of Verse

Revelation

FIND but the soul, and every man will be
A God-kissed genius, who with furnished
way
Fulfil all life, and shaping faith shall see
The plans and purposes of destiny.

Some find themselves. More oft another may,
Since life has lent to some the magnet's power
To lift from out the dark into the day,
The hero, saint and ruler of the hour.

Earth's gems stand not to common gaze revealed,
So sacredly the master hand hath laid.
In byway gulch, rock-fettered gold lies sealed,
Where storm and stress and fires eternal
played.

In human clay, forbidding and remote,
The kingly secret thrives through nursing years,
And gathers strength where man may take no note
Of patient toil and daily sweat of tears.

In silent hope it lives with mood so free,
That chasm-wall's embrace or desert's heat
Can never fret its calm. While furied sea
May merciless 'gainst every purpose beat.

A G A R L A N D O F V E R S E

It knows its own, and knowing spurns to die.
It looks across the vast expanse of life,
And strains to see the hand that lifted high
Shall beckon to the hills above the strife.

O faith supreme, that dares unerringly
Live out, unquestioned, time's fulfilling hours,
And silent keep through all, nor wearily,
Content to bide the summons of its powers!



Immortal

I HAVE seen your canvased glories,
And your marble statues rare,
I have heard heart-thrilling stories,
Witnessed deeds beyond compare;
But there 's one scene where the starting
Of the tears soon blinds the eyes,
'T is a boy and mother parting
Who each other idolize.

With the sighs and tears forbidden
That her face may wear a smile,
And her anguish nobly hidden
That his own she may beguile,
These—a mother's deep devotion,
And a love that fills the skies,
And a boy's subdued emotion
Will the scene immortalize.



⊕ Heart of God

⊕ HEART of God, beat once for me!
The bird shall build its nest
Within the shelter of the tree,
But I, within Thy breast.

O heart of God, bleed once for me!
My sins are scarlet streams
That flow to Thy forgiving sea,
Whose depths are angels' themes.

O heart of love, if pity be
Thy gift of grace to grant,
Remember broken hearts would see
The grave's steep sides made slant!

O heart of God, if tear-dimmed eyes
Can make Thee also weep,
Let beauty out of ashes rise
Where my beloved sleep!

O heart of God, if we are kin,
Give me to know my own
When Heaven's gates shall close within,
And earth and time are flown!

Persevera Ad Victoriam

I SAY! What kind of man is this
Who knows his lines, yet quits the play,
And makes the scene go all amiss
Because a shadow crossed his way?

The curtain's up, remember, lad,
And even though your part be small,
It's how you did it—good or bad—
That counts in acting, after all.

You did not choose your part, I know.
'T was handed out by Him who sees
The stations high and places low
Where fitness counts and efforts please.

But this I swear: no play is good
If meaner parts be slightly done;
And every star has one time stood
Where you are now, and honors won.

The scenes must shift, the acts move on,
And you will scarcely know, my boy,
Just how you played, until it's done
And felt the flush of labor's joy.

And if your part in life's well played,
God marks His man for higher calls;
And fitting exit, lad, is made,
When plays are done, and curtain falls.

My Besettin' Sin

I KIN 'splain you what 's de trouble,
 Why I is so late agin.
 I was dancin' twell de mo'nin',
 Down at 'Liza's whaih I bin.
 It was jes' an ev'nin' comp'ny;
 Nevah knowed twell I got in,
 W'en I foun' de folks a-dancin'.
 Lan'! Dat 's *my* besettin' sin.

Mistah Johnsing played de fiddle—
 You should hyeah dat man,
 Miss Clay—
 Ain't nobody in dis county
 Dat kin show him how to play.
 He jes' made t'ings fa'ly trimble;
 An' I was n't mo' den in,
 W'en I noticed I was dancin'—
 Laws! My *ol'* besettin' sin.

Now I knows you must be tiahed
 Waitin' up fo' me so late;
 But ef you'd 'a' bin daih, missis,
 You'd 'a' had de selfsame fate.
 I kin see dem crisscross figgers
 Wif de swingin' pardners in,
 W'en my feet commenced a-flirtin'
 Wif my *ol'* besettin' sin.

A G A R L A N D O F V E R S E

Goodness, gracious! Don't I knows it?
Ain't I tried my level bes'?
'Tain't no use to do no talkin'
W'en you feels like one possessed.
I's done prayed about dis mattah
Ev'ry blessed time I kin.
But dey 's somet'ing keeps a-sayin',
Now, dat 's *yo'* besettin' sin.

Bless my soul! Dat ain't no comfo't.
Dat 's as foolish as my feet.
I don' want to hyeah dat mentioned
W'en I takes my shinin' seat.
What I wants to know right hyeah is
In dis vale whaih I has bin,
Ef de music 's right, who 's 'sponsible
Fo' my one besettin' sin?

Ef I evah gits to Heaven—
'Spect you think my chance is slim—
I won't promise you fo' suttain
Dat as long as I 've a limb,
An' dey 's music playin' sweetly,
Dat I won't go waltzin' in:
Fo' de Lawd 'll have to 'scuse me;
Dat 's my one besettin' sin.

My Kingdom

MY kingly realm a garden is,
Where rules a jealous hand.
My subjects are the flowers fair;
The weeds my contraband.
The well-placed trees are citadels
That guard my regal land.

Of many sorts my peoples are,
Of families old and rare;
While some have humble lineage,
And all are debonair;
And each assumes some function in
My court's absorbing care.

I scarce can say which most I think
Brings honor to my state,
'Midst leaves of grass profusely spread
Where flowers radiate.
I only know of loyalty
Within my garden-gate.

And sadness mingles with my joy
As I among them walk;
For one that knew me yesterday
Hangs withered on the stalk;
For Death's trained archer overheard
My boasting subjects talk.

A G A R L A N D O F V E R S E

And yet the flowers that remain
 Bring comfort to me oft.
I greet the star-eyed daisies' smiles,
 The pansies' faces soft,
And nod unto the hollyhock's
 Ambitious head aloft.

Aristocratic orchids dressed
 More gay than any bird,
And social asters near the house
 Demand a courteous word.
The sunflower claims attention, too,
 With dignity absurd.

The princes of my royal house
 Are roses in full bloom;
And every other flower serves
 As most obedient groom.
The lilacs are the purpled troops
 That wear a knightly plume.

The violets so plentiful
 Make loyal patriots.
And bell-shaped tulips ring their chimes
 For Cupid's counterplots,
Where mignonette goes hand in hand
 With white forget-me-nots.

A G A R L A N D O F V E R S E

A cavalcade of poppies dash
 Across my vast domain.
An infantry of hyacinths
 Encroaching feet restrain.
Audacious peonies assert
 A glorious disdain.

Insinuating heliotrope
 In perfume manifest,
And stately lilies reverent,
 Cathedral aisles invest.
Imperial gladioli wear
 Embellished royal crest.

And climbing to my tower-roof,
 A sentinel alert,
Wistaria keeps a watchful eye
 On many a garden flirt.
While sweet-peas, through the lattice
 twined,
Coquetting hearts pervert.

When Winter's glistening sword is
 drawn
 Against my garden groups,
One last heroic stand is made
 Before the foliage droops;
Chrysanthemums—the grand old
 guard—
 Defend my shuddering troops.

A G A R L A N D O F V E R S E

When these are vanquished, and at last
 I view my kingdom's waste,
I sit through bitter hours alone
 Until the crocus chaste,
Through mantling snow, invincible,
 Returns with Spring post-haste.

Thus, when bleak death has stripped
 my heart
 Of all that I love best,
Still unto me shall come this peace,
 As unto those at rest—
The flowers that are dead and gone
 Will come again reblest.



Jes' a Little Angel Frien'

DOCTAH stan'in' in de do',
 Daylight stealin' crost de flo';
 Mammy's hea't is almos' broke,
 Words come slow an' seem to choke.
 Baby's han' 's so hot an' dry,
 Dat 's de reason why I cry.
 "Doctah, she done move jes' den;
 Mebbe knows yo' hyeah agen."

Doctah, solemn, shake his haid,
 Settin' side huh on de baid.
 "Mammy move de light a bit.
 Reckon she don't know yo' yit.
 She ain't nevah made no soun'
 Sence las' night w'en yo' was 'roun'.
 But we done de t'ings yo' said,
 Even put huh in our baid.

"Seems jes' lak huh little hea't
 Ain't a-beatin' very sma't.
 An' huh throat is jes' so so,
 Nothin' won't go down no mo'.
 An' huh little tongue 's so thick,
 She cain't cry, she is so sick.
 Doctah, ef yo' *kin* do mo',
 Don' yo' mind 'cause we is po'.

A G A R L A N D O F V E R S E

"I kin pay yo' every cent;
We kin live in cheapah rent.
I don' mind de cos', yo' know;
All I want 's my baby Flo.
Jes' lak white folks, huh an' me
Feels fo' baby, don' yo' see!
I kin sell de furniture
Ef de money don' seem sure."

Doctah stan'in' in de do',
Somep'n creepin' cros't de flo'.
'Tain't de daylight dat we see;
Softah dan de dawn hit be.
Somep'n seems to say Amen!
Lak de voice of Angel frien'.
Den she gives a little smile
Fo' she close huh eyes awhile.

Somep'n stan'in' in de do',
Nevah seed it daih befo';
Seems to motion to de baid
Whaih she 's sleepin'—don' say daid!
Nevah knowed how po' I be
Twell dat baby smile at me,
Jes' befo' she move away
In de dawnin' of dat day.

Melodies in Memoriam

I AM haunted by phantom sounds tonight
Of the music of long ago,
Whose shadowy notes in reverie's light
Set fond memory all aglow.
As skilful a hand picks my heartstrings now,
When the tremulous notes die out,
As when in those days the player somehow
Mingled sunshine with shadows of doubt.

A beautiful hand swept the keys of old;
A hand that was sculptured in love;
And the gentle touch in the music told
Of saints here as well as above.
There floats tonight through my soul's music-hall
The old songs my sweetheart loved well.
And mem'ries of youth, of love-time, and all
Come back by the conjurer's spell.

There flits in and out of my soul's song-room,
A sweet air in a minor key;
And it fills me now with the same dull gloom
As when 't was first given to me.
She played those sad notes in our sweetheart days,
And I heard them and felt them, too;
For I covered the page with brighter lays,
Lest our lives wear a somber hue.

A G A R L A N D O F V E R S E

Oft when the day had its measure of care,
Together at twilight we played;
And the song seemed as if some new words were
there,
That thrilled me as though she had prayed.
I'm dreaming tonight of a harp of gold
Responsive again to her touch.
She's playing those songs as in days of old
That as sweethearts we loved so much.



Little Boy

• **B**RING your broken toy; I'll mend it,
Little boy.
All your care could not prevent it;
But together let us mend it.
It will give the friend who sent it
Greater joy,
Little boy.

Bring your broken heart; I'll mend it,
Little boy.
All my love could not prevent it.
With our tears we'll try to mend it.
It will give the friend who sent it
Greater joy,
Little boy.

Best Time to Go A-Fishin'

PEP! Best time to go a-fishin'
'S when a feller feels he must.
'Taint no use a-balkin' nacher.
She 's got plans a saint can't bust.
When she makes me feel so lazy
That to work would be a sin,
I don't b'lieve in spoilin' nacher:
I just quit, and give right in.

I ain't got much use for railin'
'Gainst the things that don't seem clear;
Durned sight better keep on bailin'
Out this boat 'fore Dad gits here.
That 's one thing I've often noticed,
Dad and nacher don't agree.
When I want to go a-fishin',
Dad seems bent on hind'rin' me.

Still sometimes I ain't sure whether
Nacher kin take care of me
When I git back home from fishin',
And the fam'ly don't agree.
There are several kinds of feelin's
That are so mixed up, you see,
That I don't jes' care for fishin'
When the subject 's broached to me.

Home

HOME, just home for me.
Lonely, worn out with the fray,
Anxious over trouble's way,
Oh, the comfort when I say
Home, just home for me!

Home, just home for me.
Nowhere else comes rest to stay,
No place else can peace convey,
Only home can soothe alway,
Home, just home for me!

Home, just home for me.
When my burdened soul astray,
Seeks the joy of yesterday,
Let me come back home to stay,
Home, just home with Thee!

Home, just home for me.
Broken, spurned, heart-hungry, lay
All my dreams aside, I pray,
Let me find my willing way
Home, just home to Thee!

Home, just home for me.
When I weary of life's play,
May my tired footsteps stray
Into paths that lead away
Home, just home to Thee!

Ain't You Got No Chilluns?

AIN'T you got no chilluns, honey,
 In dis great big lonesome house?
 Why, my sakes alive! dis stillness
 It ain't healthy fo' a mouse!
 'Tain't dat way in Ol' Virginny.
 Daih dey lets de chilluns grow
 Lak de watermelons, hidin',
 Whaih de sweet corn-tassels blow.

Why, I nevali see sech primpness
 Sence de day dat I was bo'n.
 Goodness, honey, ain't you lonesome
 'Thout some kids lyeah of yo' own?
 Fo' it sholy ain't de climate
 Makes you all so white an' po',
 Hit 's because you has no chilluns
 Hangin' round de kitchen do'!

Dat 's de reason yo' 's so nervous
 Without nothin' on yo' mind.
 Ef you had a lot o' younguns,
 Den yo'd hev no nerves to grind.
 W'en you has a heap o' chilluns
 Tuggin' at yo' apurn-strings
 You ain't got no time fo' troubles,
 'Ceptin' what real sorrow brings.

A G A R L A N D O F V E R S E

How you reckon dat 'uligion 's
Gwine to save dis sinful lan',
Ef daih ain't a crop o' chilluns
To be fetched up by de han' ?
How 's de Lawd a-gwine to run things,
Wif His angel choir on high,
Ef daih ain't a mess o' chilluns
He can take up to de sky ?

Oh, my precious! What 'm I sayin' ?
I 'm a reg'lar ol' black fool.
Nevah knowed it honey, darling.
Let me fetch you somethin' cool.
Don't go on lak dat, my precious;
Ef de Lawd He takes 'em, den
Jes' you trus' His lovin' kindness,
An' you softly say, Amen!

Why, de good Lawd really needs 'em
Jes' to make His house mo' bright,
Lak dem flowers yo 's got yonder,
Sweet'nin' everyt'ing in sight.
Cain't you hyeah Him sayin', precious,
"Let de chilluns come to me,
I will keep 'em twell you need 'em
Fo' yo' home up yonder." See ?

A GARLAND OF VERSE

Yes, I knows how you is pinin'
Fo' a sight of daih sweet eyes.
Only dem as gives daih chilluns
Knows de heartaches an' de sighs.
But yo' ain't forgotten, honey,
By de One who loves you bes',
Fo' He says so kind, "Yo' chilluns
I have folded to my breas'."

Jes' you follow His example.
Take some little lamb in hyeah,
An' de Lawd 'll love yo' babies
All de mo' because you care.
I kin hyeah Him sayin' sweetly,
"In dis world whaih sorrows roam
Daih's a heap o' chilluns, honey,
Makin' Heaven of a home!"



My Boy in Blue

AH, sailor chap with jaunty cap,
Thy nimble fingers sails unwrap;
And white wings free blow out to sea,
To lure thee back to love and me.

I proudly view thy form in blue,
That hallows even Neptune's hue.
Thy roguish eyes plucked from the skies,
A dreamy heaven glorifies.

Thy face of tan the breezes fan,
Till fair-haired boy is turned to man.
In merry play the wind and spray
Toss kisses to thee night and day.

Ah, boy in blue, when hearts are true,
The stars at dusk rejoice anew.
And love shall keep within the deep,
Its secret where fond visions sleep.

In fancy free across the sea
A golden path I trace to thee.
Soft beams afloat make less remote
The moonlit waves that gild thy boat.

In rose-tipped shells, sweet music dwells,
And lulls me with its wild sea-bells.
And spirits fair that fill the air
Go singing round me everywhere.

A G A R L A N D O F V E R S E

In mad retreat, the breakers beat,
And hurl their trophies at my feet.
The tangled weeds through foamy beads
Proclaim the drift's unholy deeds.

A wilder sea possesses me;
Within my heart it surges free;
And storms arise to tantalize;
But love rebukes and sanctifies.

The cherished sea that flows so free
Is but my heart that carries thee.
On billow's crest with snowy breast,
The sea-gull typifies thy rest.

O'er ceaseless tide thy ship may glide,
But ever thou art by my side.
For love's fair sea that cradles me
Is shoreless as eternity.



The Star of Bethlehem

STAR of prophetic fame,
Out of the East it came,
Burning with sacred flame,
Leading to God.

Set in the darkest night,
Rimmed with undying light,
Wise men discerned it right,
Leading to God.

Incense they brought, and gold,
Myrrh, and sweet gifts untold.
These were the men of old,
Worshiping God.

Bethlehem's stars of night!
Such are the hearts made right,
Where shines a holy light—
Indwelling God.

Star of unheralded fame,
Mortal, but yet aflame,
Breathing Emmanuel's name,
Lead me to God!

The Miners' Collection

HE was young, but the feller had grit.
 I could see he was makin' a hit.
 When his sermon was done, he made clear,
 "What we need is a church, boys, right here.
 What's the matter with tryin' to see
 How much cash we can raise? Start with me."
 Then he planked down a ten, an' I found
 He wanted me to pass my hat 'round.
 He meant business: I had to sail in.
 So I called on the boys for the tin.
 'T was a dollar the first feller dropped;
 But I wanted a five, so I stopped.

"That ain't jest the right price, Jim!" I said.
 So he laid down a five-spot instead.
 Then the boys give a laugh, an' I knowed
 That the money that day would be blowed
 Without usin' a large 'mount o' lead
 On somebody's ornery old head.
 So I went through the aisles, an' the chink
 Kept droppin' with the liveliest clink,
 Till I got down to Sandy McGann,
 "Jest take back that brass button, my man!"
 "Huh! To hell with the church and with you!"
 Then my six-shooter come into view.

"Now then, Sandy," I says, "you cough up,
 If you value your bald-headed cup!"
 'T was a job to make Sandy look tame,
 But he made up his mind I was game.

Then a shilling he dropped without fear.
"Take it back, man, I 'm not sellin' beer.
Now you 'll give every damn cent you 've got!"
An' the money come out on the spot.
First a dollar, then two, then a five.
I says, "Sandy, give thanks you 're alive!"
An' the fellers they give sech a shout,
That poor Sandy himself laughed right out.

Well, sir, after I held up that crowd,
We 'd a collection to make you feel proud.
'T was a thousand an' more that we got,
An' McGann said he 'd donate the lot.
But the preacher looked stumped for a bit,
Then he answered with ready good wit:
"I should say that the work was well done,
Though it 's mostly been raised with a gun;
Yet I 'm thinkin' that lead, don't you know,
Is good leaven for raisin' the dough!"



The Interrupted Play

I WAS but a child till then,
In a Kingdom ruled by play,
When my father—loved of men—
Took a journey far away.

All my childish toys lay strewn
Round about in sad dismay;
Well-drilled soldiers in platoon
Halted in their march that day.

Trains of cars stood very still
Where I left them 'neath the tree;
Wooden cattle roamed at will
In that Kingdom made for me.

Phantom figures moved about
In the darkened house all day;
Sad-faced men, too, stood without
While my world stopped in its play.

But no father's hand was laid
On my tired head that night,
When alone I sobbed and prayed
With my playthings out of sight.

And I could not know the end
Of my childhood's dream till then;
Nor my playthings comprehend
That I would not come again.

A G A R L A N D O F V E R S E

So from play to work I went;
And from work to toil and strife;
Yet the playthings all content
Quite forgot my dreamless life.

But I never could forget
That a hand had stopped my play;
And that boyhood claimed a debt
Of my manhood day by day.

It was in that manhood when,
In a Kingdom free from play,
All my childhood's longing 'gain
Clutched my heart on Christ's sweet
day.

For the Christmas toys displayed,
On my childish debt lay claim;
And I knew Christ's day was made
For the children when He came.

So I took the fairest toys
From the windows' splendid hoard,
And with thoughts of youthless boys,
Carried gifts as from my Lord.

And I watched with tearful gleam
On that Christ-boy's Holy Day.
Other children fill the dream
Of my interrupted play.

So Let My Light Shine

DEAR LORD, make me a lamp to
shine,

And spread a gracious light;
Though I may be in spirit poor,
Let Heaven's lamp burn bright.

Oh, that this needy bowl unfilled
Might from Thy holy word
The oil of comfort freely draw
With love's absorbing cord.

Grant me a place my lamp to stand,
That shedding light around
I may inherit earth's blest sphere
Where faith and love abound.

Grant most of all Thy holy fire
To set the lamp alight.
My hungry soul implores Thy grace
That I may burn aright.

Thus in great wisdom may I shine,
And bless in mercy they
Who sit in darkness 'midst the light,
Yet need to know Thy way.

Then shall I mercy, too, obtain,
Because undimmed I shine,
And with a pure heart manifest
That Thou, O God, art mine.

A G A R L A N D O F V E R S E

The gate of Heaven would I light
For those in ways of sin,
To show them where the Sons of God
In peace go safely in.

And if too brightly seems my light
To shine for weaker eyes,
Make them to bless who persecute,
And blindly criticize.

To claim Thy heavenly kingdom, Lord,
I would be wholly thine;
Rejoicing that Thy loving grace
Still lets my poor light shine.

That men may see in hearts aflame
How good works multiply,
And unto Thee give all the praise,
And ever glorify.



'T is Then We Know

WHEN the ship's last signal's given,
And in vain we smile through tears,
Knowing well the heart is riven
By the thought of lonely years;
When we gaze in eyes where love is,
When we see her face no more,
Then it is to know what love is,
Looking toward a foreign shore.

Hunting gold midst blinding sorrow
Just to win a woman's smile;
Dying now to live tomorrow
An Arcadian afterwhile;
Seeking solace where the crowd is,
Yet more lonely than before;
Then it is to know what love is,
Waiting on a foreign shore.

Years creep by and lucre golden
Heaps itself by effort's side
And the fair form, now grown olden,
Speeds across the ocean wide.
Then to gaze in eyes where love is,
And to press her lips once more,
Then it is to know what love is,
Waiting on a foreign shore.

When life's summer grows to winter
And its roses fade and fall;

When in vain we try to hinder
Death's commissioned right to all;
When on white lips there's a last kiss
And we see her face no more,
Then it is to know what love is,
Waiting on a foreign shore.



Death

WHEN first I saw thee, knew thee not,
Save as relentless foe,
Believing thou could'st only plot
Unfathomable woe,

I from thee turned with bitter moan,
And bore thee lasting hate;
But now thy deeper purpose known
Seems all compassionate.

When senseless pain impedes the breath
Life's fevered fires expend,
Quick-coming, cool, enfolding death,
I greet thee as a friend.

Oh, Furdge!

SAMBO dressed so fine and neat;
 'Liza comin' down de street;
 Darkies standin' all aroun',
 Shirkin' work, you may be bound.
 Nex' best job is flirtin' sly,
 Wif de ladies passin' by.
 "Howdy 'Liza? Lovely day!"
 Nevah noticed what he say.
 Snappy eyes and head so proud,
 Kind o' tickles all de crowd
 Sambo cut, but smilin' gay,
 Dis is all we hyeahs him say,
 "Oh, furdge!"

Ev'rybody at de dance;
 Sambo lookin' fo' his chance.
 Stovepipe hat, piccadilly,
 Long frock coat, smilin' silly.
 Ladies comin' through de do';
 Sambo slippin' on de flo'.
 Dinah sashay cross de room,
 Fines' bride fo' any groom.
 "May I have de pleasure, deah?"
 "Eggs ain't chickens 'cause yo' 're
 hyeah!"
 Almos' took his bref away,
 W'en we hyeahs him cough an' say,
 "Oh, furdge!"

Sunday night w'en meetin' 's out;
 Sambo leanin' 'gainst de spout;
 Ladies lookin' mighty fine;
 Boys a-standin' up in line.
 Ca'line is de bigges' catch;
 Sambo's buggy 'side de patch.
 "May I see yo' home, Miss Hood?"
 "Thank yo', yes; yo' 's very good."
 Sambo's vict'ry come at las'!
 Dinah walkin' home so fas',
 'Liza by herself go by,
 Sambo say with head up high,
 "Oh, furdge!"



The Three F's

IF you want to make a fortune,
 And the prize be easy won,
 Then invest your ready money
 In the Fashions, Food or Fun.

For the poorest must wear clothing,
 And the dullest must have fun,
 And the beggar must keep eating
 Till the course of life is run.

These three F's are sordid furies
 That pursue the human race;
 For with Fun, and Food, and Fashions,
 Life keeps up a mad'ning chase.

The White Feet of the Morrow

I AM sitting alone with my sorrow
In the house of my soul's sad plaint,
And where the white feet of the morrow
Approach with the tread of a saint.

In this house of regret I am keeping
A vigil that never may cease,
While 'round me the dead past comes creeping,
Restraining the white feet of peace.

The ashes of virtue lie shriveled,
The gaunt eyes of fear stare at me;
The walls of my conscience are leveled,
That the face of my soul I may see.

And I shudder to think of the anguish
In the wordless reproaches it brings,
While midst desolate ruins I languish,
And the garment of death 'round me clings.

With the solace of pity denied me,
I crouch in the shade of my sin.
Lest the joy of a tear be unseemly,
I stifle despair from within.

For every dead hope is a phantom
That grimaces over its tomb;
The specters of pleasure, at random,
Mock pitilessly at my sad doom.

A G A R L A N D O F V E R S E

And a hand that was mine is inditing
A sentence of fate on the wall,
While my soul interpreting the writing
Is more fearful to see than it all.

In a silence so dread and pervading,
Transmitting each throb of the past,
Remorse, black-winged, comes invading—
Grim scavenger of mem'ries that last.

With the will of a master I summon
My powers again to their task;
But their service to me once so common
Is forfeited now, ere I ask.

And sitting alone with my sorrow
In the house of my soul's complaint,
I dream that the future may borrow
The virtues and grace of a saint.

The white feet that tread where I sorrow—
Too pure for the breath of a word—
Are tenderly bearing the morrow
As wings bear the weight of a bird.

But soft though they tread in life's hallway,
The prints that are marked show with
blood;
For the path that they follow must alway
Pass over the brink of sin's flood.

A G A R L A N D O F V E R S E

And I clutch at the feet of each morning
 To wipe with the hairs of my head,
While the house-bells of conscience give warning,
 "Time's feet trail the shroud of the dead."

I am sitting alone with my sorrow,
 And utter no word of complaint,
For I know the white feet of the morrow
 Will press with the grace of a saint.



Alone With the Roses

HE is sleeping alone with the roses tonight,
With the roses he loved and caressed.
I am heavy with woe, but the roses are light,
As they tenderly lie on his breast.

He is sleeping alone, but the roses seem right,
Though the thorns are reserved for my breast;
And my heart is less sad, and the roses more bright,
As I think of them sharing his rest.

Alone with the roses! Sweet Christ, not alone;
The roses he loved and caressed,
Seem only for this to have blossomed and grown—
To lie with him there on Thy breast.



Now Dat's What I Calls Music!

W'EN little Grace begins to play,
Ain't no mo' work fo' me dat day.
Dat ol' pianner fills de place
Wif music sweet as huh white face.
I loves to hyeah huh w'en she plays
Dem ol'-time chunes of bygone days.
My hea't done cease to want to roam
W'en hearin' "Ol' Kentucky Home."
Now *dat's* what I calls music!

An' w'en she starts in soft an' low,
I knows what 's comin'—"Ol' Black Joe."
An' den my hea't it feels a-twitchin',
An' Heaven 's hyeah in dis ol' kitchen.
I stands a-listenin' at de do'
Untwell de tears draps on de flo'.
An' through de notes I hyeahs so plain,
Dem angel voices in God's lane.
Now *dat's* what I calls music!

An' w'en I 's homesick fo' my own,
An' thinks how I 's been left alone,
Somehow I thanks my Lawd and Giver,
Fo' "Down Upon de Suwanee River."
Daih's somepin' in dat song, you know,
Dat's mo' den words dat moves me so.
I reckon all hearts late or soon
Feels sorrow written in a chune.
Ah, *dat's* what I calls music!

A G A R L A N D O F V E R S E

W'en "Home, Sweet Home," I hyeahs huh play,
I feels as ef 't was time to pray.
Fo' dat's de chune dat's nearest right
Fo' makin' black folks seem lak white.
Daih's sech a humbleness aroun',
I knows a home fo' all is foun';
An' dat His love fo' me's de same,
Fo' dis black mammy's not to blame.
Now *dat's* what I calls music!

But daih's one chune, praise God fo' it!
Dat to my heart is closest knit.
It's "Way Down South in Dixie Lan'."
It lifts my feet, it moves my han';
It shakes dese ol' bones through an' through
It gives a glimpse of Glory's view.
An' den I shouts, an' den I sings,
Fo' "Dixie" fa'ly gives me wings!
Hi! *Dat's* what I calls *music*!



Fishin'

ONE day Swope an' me went fishin'.
 Fer a long time he 'd been wishin'
 To take a trip down on the lake
 To show me what a haul he 'd make.
 So we hired a boat, an' he rowed
 To the place that he said he knowed
 Was alive with fish. An' says he,
 "Si, here 's the place for fish, you 'll see."

I was in the stern a-settin',
 Sayin' little, but a-gettin'
 Lots o' fish. But Swope was kickin'
 'Bout the place, an' always pickin'
 Up his line, lookin' at the bait,
 An' sayin' that we come too late.
 Then he rowed th' ol' boat 'roun'
 To a place where he said he foun'

Plenty o' fish one day last year.
 Then he said, "It 's most mighty queer
 You kin git fish an' my line 's bare."
 He was mad enough to swear.
 "Swope," I says, "you ain't a-fishin';
 What you 're doin' is jest a-wishin'.
 Ef you want fish to take your bait,
 You 'll hev to learn to set an' wait.
 Ain't no luck in always pickin'
 Some new place. It comes by stickin'!"

The Dream of a Kiss

IN a little trundle-bed,
With its pillows soft and white,
Sinks a boy's fair, curly head,
Lost in slumber for the night.
Dreams of toys and fairy queen
Through the gentle eyelids peep,
While a mother's form unseen
Comes to kiss him in his sleep.

Toys forsaken, life begun,
Time has brought new dreams at night;
For the fairy queen is won,
And the vision glows with light.
Form divine, it comes to greet
Lips of love and blue eyes deep,
And he wakes and murmurs sweet,
"Some one kissed me in my sleep."

Dreams find substance in the day,
And in sportive play at night
Fancy, reckless, holds her sway,
Weaving visions golden bright.
Witching maiden, guard thee well
Youth's sweet dream in slumber deep.
Lest some evil break the spell,
Kiss thy sweetheart in his sleep.

The Conquest

TWO kings there were from distant realms
Who sought to conquer earth:
One held his court with wine and song,
The other free from mirth.

Across the plains eternal strode
These conquering hosts supreme,
Resplendent in the star-swept sky,
With banners all agleam.

The sumptuous earth lay at their feet.
Its coronet of snow,
And breast, sun-girdled, filled the scene
With bright, supernal glow.

Great plans of conquest brought these kings—
Predestined with success
For him who knew the surest way
To enter and possess.

So counsel took they 'twixt themselves
Of ways that both should heed;
That thus unhindered each might strive,
Yet still be well agreed.

The merry king cried, "By its head
I shall the world incline."
But he of solemn mien declared,
"I choose the heart for mine."

A G A R L A N D O F V E R S E

And thus their armaments were placed
On fronted battle-plain,
Where sworded truth as cold as steel
Touched love as soft as rain.

The king who held his court of mirth,
In shrewdness gave command,
"Let Wisdom's weapons strike the earth,
And victors shall we land."

The sad-faced king besought his hosts:
"Use thou no reasoning art.
Let every loving arrow find
The unsuspecting heart."

And thus in battle's drilled array,
Stern fact and sense unreal,
Thrust at the splendid world, as kings,
Their shafts of love and steel.

But one in deep compassion wept,
Beholding earth so tried,
And 'midst his hosts still-wrapt by prayer,
He put his crown aside.

The other saw confusion strike
His hosts with dread alarm,
That sight of such a kingly act,
A world could swift disarm.

Then crept a white-winged angel close
To God upon His throne:
"Behold the earth hath seen Thy face
Where tears of pity shone.

"Thy conquering love hath won where truth
Brought no convincing grace;
Earth's troubled heart is satisfied,
For love sees face to face."



Let a Woman Hev Her Way

LET a woman hev her way."
That's what I tol' Swope one day:
He and Mandy had a fuss;
Swope talked back, and things got wuss,
Then he come a-vis'tin' me,
Edgin' 'round for sympathy.

"Swope," I says, "it ain't no use
Gittin' madder than the deuce.
When a woman thinks she's right
Shet yer trap up good and tight.
Gawd Himself ain't got no say,
When a woman wants her way."

Boy, Don't Forget Your Cue

IT is n't fair to go through life
Lamenting things askew;
For, really, lad, the blame is yours
For having missed your cue.

You seemed so bored with life's dull parts
Assigned with thought, that you,
In spurning them as commonplace,
Let some one take your cue.

Dear boy! I hear you wishing back
The hours that once you knew,
Wherein you dreamed away your chance
When fate pronounced your cue.

No use, my boy! Turn face about
And get another view.
Life holds no grudges, but forgives,
If you will take her cue.



Death of Mark Twain

FRRIEND of my youth, must I bid thee adieu,
Like the dear days that have slipped out of view,
Vanishing into a dreamy past,
Friend of my youth, beloved to the last?

Textured in wit and good humor, thy soul
Claims even Paradise, winningly droll.
Dear to the Gods, still dearer to men,
Long will we smile and behold thee again.

Thine was the gift to make merry and glad,
Out of a heart that was broken and sad.
Smiles were the creases and wrinkles of care,
Wrought into glorified sunshine and prayer.

Broad as the river thy pilot-hand plied,
So coursed thy love like its silver-streaked tide.
Friends were as many as stars in the sky;
Greetings are over. The world bids "good-by."

Crowned with a coronet whiter than snow;
Gray-haired and weary thy head lieth low.
Yet in death's vale friendly lights are aflame,
Borrowing their beams from thy glorious name.

Friend of my youth, we never shall part;
Life is unending where love keeps the heart.
Longing for death thou hast found fuller life;
Friend of my youth, thou art done with the strife.

Merriest tramp that was ever abroad,
Earth moves more kindly, seems less to defraud.
Ended with toil, thou wilt never more roam;
Sweet be thy rest, 'loved "Innocence at Home."



The Three Wrecks

WITH every line of grace preserved, and strength
Abundant showing in thy storm-scourged length,
Thy tangled spars and masts in sad dismay
Above the wild sea tell thy hopes' decay,
And ghosts of men go haunting thy dark deck,
Thou splendid wreck!

O fallen monarch, rest thy snow-crowned head
Upon oblivion's pillow in fate's bed,
While life's low fire sends a flickering spark
Into the eyes that held men to their mark
And won obedience to thy every beck,
Thou splendid wreck!

O once fair queen, thy court hath long since fled—
Rosebud cheeks, carmine lips, proud eyes—all dead!
Yet mocking time withholds death's hoary hand
To spare awhile thy grace and manners grand,
As age untwines youth's pearls from thy fair neck,
Thou splendid wreck!

The Shadow

I SAW a sun that spread its golden light;
But shadows fell when objects interposed.
I saw how sin could cast a deeper blight,
When, 'twixt my God and me, it stood
disposed.

I saw the Truth that had revealing might;
But doubt, opposing, fixed its shadow long.
I saw how hearts with Love's dispensing light
Could banish suns, while cherishing the wrong.

I saw how Hell was but a shadow cast
By souls opposing Heaven, Truth and Right.
I saw how Life with all its darkened past
Could banish shade, possessing only light.

I saw how Life could get so close to God
That, like the object's interfering way,
Its shadows faded when the angles odd
Straightened in Truth, beneath Love's direct
ray.

I also saw where Heaven's light went free,
And unopposed, no shadow fell.
There Truth, and Light, and Love—God's
trinity—
My vision closed upon a vanished Hell.

Transmigration

SAID Hans to Yacob, "Now, vat is dis ting
Dat der peoples calls transfermigration?"
"Vell, Hans," said Yacob, "such questions you
bring!

Don't you never had no education?

"You see, ven you dies, Hans, you ain't yust
right dead,

You got to be somedings besides.

You 're a leetle dog first, den a bird, blue or red,
Und dere 's vere your soul goes und hides.

"You 're a nice leetle pup vich some rich lady buys,
Und takes on her lap for to pet,
Und, by golly, den, Hans, you yust goes und dies,
Und comes out a leetle bird yet.

"Den you lives in a cage mit a nice leetle schwing,
Und you schwings und schwings till you dies,
Ven you turns to a donkey, und dat 's der last ting,
Und der neighbors comes out und looks wise.

"Und dey pulls your long ears, und pet you
somehow

Und says ven all troo mit der fuss,

'Vell, Hans, old man, you ain't much different now
From der ting vat you used to vas.' "

A Gentleman's Word

(David Livingstone's Reply to His Friend.)

FAR away in an African hut on his knees
By the side of his wilderness cot,
David Livingstone prayed with the faith that love
sees,
While a friend mourned his life's lonely lot.

"I am never alone," thus he answered his friend,
As the cold sweat of death pressed his brow.
"On a gentleman's word I have learned to depend;
I am trusting that word even now."

"'I am with thee,' He said. 'T was a gentleman's
word.
As a king gives his pledge from the throne,
So He gave me His word as a gentleman would,
And that ends it—I am not alone."

And the candle burned low as his heart ceased to
beat,
But he knew that he was not alone;
He had fallen asleep seeing death in retreat
Where the lights of eternity shone.

"To the end of the world, I am with thee alway."
Like the day's dawn these sunlit words broke.
"I will never forsake thee; I am with thee for aye,"
Were the words that a gentleman spoke.

A G A R L A N D O F V E R S E

So they buried his heart 'neath an African tree,
And it hallows the spot, since we know
Where his treasure was, there his heart may well be
'Midst the people he lifted from woe.

And beneath a gray pavement of memoried stone
In Westminster his bones are interred,
Where he sleeps in sweet peace, and he is not alone,
For his trust is a gentleman's word.



Alone

DAY, not tired; lonely!
Through the years
Nothing cheers.
There are sorrows only.

Say not, I should bear it.
Courage flies
From the eyes,
When love sees death wear it.

Say'st thou, too, "I'm lonely?"
Bide with me.
Tenderly
I will love thee only.

Rest, My Child

GO to your bed, my child,
And rest your weary bones;
For bones will ache, and hearts must break,
But you will find rest, my child.

So go to your rest, my child.
A tender hand made the bed.
He knows of your moans, and your aching bones,
And He wants you to rest, my child.

So sleep in your couch, my child.
The grave is a dreamless bed;
And your aching bones will lie under the stones,
But you will have rest, my child.



Gettin' 'Uligion

DEY was holdin' 'tracted meetin'
 Down at Shiloh Methodist;
 An' de noise dat dey was makin'
 Sholy showed me what I missed.
 I could hyeah dem hallelujahs,
 An' dem amens way out hyeah,
 An' de preachah's words to sinnahs
 'Bout de jedgment bein' neah.

I don' know jes' why I did it,
 But I stepped right in de do'
 An' I marched myse'f up boldly
 To de front by Sistah Moore.
 Lan'! But she was mighty happy,
 An' her arms were swingin' wild,
 An' I had to dodge so of'en,
 Dat my hat was nearly sp'iled.

An' de preachah kep' on shoutin',
 An' de amens came so fas',
 Dat I almos' fel' fo' suttain
 Dat my time had come at las'.
 Den befo' I knowed what happen',
 Sistah Moore let out a yell,
 An' she flopped right ovah on me,
 An' I knowed she had a spell.

An' I also noticed somet'ing
 Dat mos' took my bref away;
 On her left hand was a di'mon',
 Dat cos' mo' dan her las' pay!
 I could feel my blood a-b'ilin',
 Fo' I fel' myse'f outraged;
 An' I pushed her ovah, sayin',
 "Liza Moore, yo' 's 'come engaged!"

Dat was quite sufficient sholy,
 Fo' she rolled her eyes an' said,
 "Ef I is, hit 's my own business;
 Bettah shet yo' jealous head."
 "Now I knows why yo' 's so happy,"
 An' I kind o' smiled a bit,
 "I don' wondah dat de di'mon'
 Come neah givin' yo' a fit."

Lan'! I wished you could ha' seen her,
 Goodness! How 'uligion goes,
 W'en yo' gits de leas' bit pers'nal,
 An' yo' treads on people's toes.
 "Look-a-hyeah now, Ca'line Higgins,
 Yo 's done said enough to me;
 Mebbe yo 'll need some 'uligion,
 W'en I tells yo' who he be!"

Lan'! Hit flashed through me so sudden
 Dat I could n't speak; I raved.
 An' de congregation shouted,
 T'inkin' dat we bof was saved.

"Oh, my Lawd! Hit 's Mistah Jackson!"

Dat was every word I said.

But de amens drowned de las' part,

Fo' some sense come in my head.

Den somebody asked me sudden,

"Sistah, has de light broke in?"

"Yes," I says, "hit has fo' suttain;

Don' yo' come a-buttin' in!

Hit 's a mighty poor 'uligion

Dat makes people shout an' sing,

Jes' because Mose Jackson give 'em,

Some one else's di'mon' ring!"



In the Sorrowing Night

THE night is not less kindly than the day,
Nor sorrow more a foe than joy's sweet way.
The summer winds that ruffle yon bird's wing,
To peaceful rest, white sails and wanderers bring.

O broken heart, that knows the lonely night!
Ten thousand stars are shining as thy right;
And every tear that falls from love's fond eyes,
Shall force the pearl-set gates of Paradise.

Oh, Thou Inexorable Grief

OH, thou inexorable grief
And common thief!
That ruthlessly doth seize the best
From out the nest,
And leave me wondering of the need
For all my care. What empty meed
If death's brief work should supersede
In cruel jest!

Oh, thou uncompromising foe
And dreaded woe!
Who gave thee thy Titanic might
And appetite?
What need to wear the garb of death,
And covet every human breath,
And make the grave thy shibboleth,
If life was right?

Oh, thou divinest healer Time
And thing sublime!
That thou should'st gladly life's lorn nest
Anew invest,
And set before the eyes of man
A deeper purpose, holier plan,
And gently bridge the abysmal span,
'Twixt earth and rest!

Two 's Company

JUST a dinky little schoolhouse,
And a kinky little maid,
And two blinky little eyelets
In a perfect renegade.

Just a pinky little schoolboy,
And a winky little maid,
When a jinky little battle
By two pairs of eyes is made.

Just a linking little armlet
'Round a shrinking little maid,
When a slinking little mouselet
Comes to join the ambushade.

Just a blinky, pinky lover,
And a kinky, winky maid,
And a slinking, shrinking mouselet
In the dinkiest parade.

Just a would-be hero vanquished
By a girlie's shriek aloud;
But a good old adage lingers,
Two is company, three 's a crowd.

It's Good to Hev a Talk

IT may seem a little funny
Jest to want to set and talk,
And be losin' time and money;
But it does you good to talk.

It perhaps ain't much you 're sayin',
But you 're better for the talk,
And you 're mighty glad for stayin'
With the friend who liked to talk.

Jest so long as folks hev feelin'
For a helpful kind of talk,
There 'll be messages of healin'
In somebody's simple talk.

Maybe some poor chap is needin'
Such a chance to hev a talk,
And your conversation leadin'
Makes him feel relieved to talk.

What's the sense of so much skimpin'
When the cheapest thing is talk?
There's a lot o' people limpin'
Who 'd be straightened with a talk.

Yet I reckon I don't ever
Say the right thing when I talk,
But I'd doggoned sooner never
Say it right than not to talk.

A GARLAND OF VERSE

When I see some folks a-settin'
Like the Sphinx who could n't talk,
I kin hardly keep from gettin'
Into trouble with my talk.

There they set like some old miser
'Fraid to waste their golden talk,
When they 'd be a durned sight wiser
Takin' time to hev a talk.

'Taint expected you 'd be blowin'
If your closest friends don't talk.
That's a way some folks have showin'
That good friends don't need to talk.

And at times when friends are grievin'
And you wish that you could talk,
There's a silence most reliev'in',
For it ain't no time to talk.

There's a time of golden silence
For the fellow who *kin* talk,
But it ain't a *nach'ral* vi'lence
That the deaf and dumb don't talk.



Unrest

UNRESTING soul! is there no place
Where peace is meant to stay?
Or is it thus thy conquests trace
Their deviating way?

Hast thou no anchorage in the years
That like a sea surge 'round?
No place to rest among the spheres
That spin in ways profound?

What makes for rest? What brings content?
If these be solemn ends
In whose attaining years are spent,
Who is it comprehends?

What purpose foul, or plan well-meant
Unsatisfies thy day,
Yet leaves thee with thy folded tent
Celestially to stray?

There is no rest, nor yet content
As through thy changing way
The heights are reached, if thou lament
Thy disappointing day.

Nor would'st thou e'er be satisfied
With inactivity
That sees thy wishes gratified
In dull satiety.

A G A R L A N D O F V E R S E

Then press thou on, nor blindly go,
But take fresh courage, soul,
Nor count unrest to be a foe
When faith is in control.

If naught of earth can satisfy,
What need of better guide?
A higher view shall clarify
The visions that divide.

On! On! Exulting, restless soul,
Till earth and time are run,
When through the ages that unroll,
God's clarion sounds, "Well done!"

Then shalt thou know that rest and peace
Are holier names for life,
Whose godlike labors never cease,
Yet have no part in strife.



Who Are These ?

'T IS the holy Sabbath day
When men pray.
In a most exalted way
Hear them say:

"Holy, Holy, Holy Lord
Most adored!
Let Thy gracious gifts be poured
To reward."

'T is the holy Sabbath day
When men pray;
And the toilers in dismay
Hear them say:

"Holy, Holy, Holy Lord
Well adored!
On the poor our gifts we poured
From our hoard."

'T is the white-heat Judgment-Day
When men pray,
And the Lord so oft adored
Turns to say:

"Unto all my gifts I gave
To enrich;
Who comes bringing? Friend or knave?
Answer, which?"

Then the angels 'round the throne
Where men pray,
Gather up the hearts of stone
To repay.

Lo, a white-robed throng appears
In the way,
And a shout triumphant cheers—
“These are they

“Who Thy precious gift have sought
While men schemed;
And with white hands have they brought
Souls redeemed!”



The Pilgrimage

ⓅUT of the harbor, into the sea,
Loosed from thy moorings, buoyant and free,
Go, happy ship! my prayers urge thee on;
Bring them to safety who from me are gone.

Out of the harbor, into the sea,
Loosed from all earth-ties, sinless and free,
Go, happy soul! my prayers waft thee on,
I would in safety come where thou art gone.

Faithful

FOR twenty long years she had met the same
train,
In summer and winter, in sunshine and rain.
Twenty long years, never missing a day!
Twenty sad years, with a silent dismay!

And her sorrowful eyes would scan every face
As she clasped her thin hands in a bitter embrace;
A stifled low moan, and a face blanched with pain,
Then she slipped out of sight like the unthinking
train.

She came and she went with her mind all a blank,
Save for this one event that held sacred rank;
And ever each day as the train-time returned,
Her heart came expectant, her weary eyes burned.

But the look died away, and the eyes lost their
light,
As her shabby black figure passed out in the night.
In a night that was rayless, loveless, unsphered,
She moved like a phantom and then disappeared.

Twenty long years, and the years full of death,
Stifling the heart and abating the breath!
In unfailing hope to the place of their tryst
She came like a shadow, and went like the mist.

And if he should come through the darkness without
Would the half-crazed remnant of her hope die out?
Or the years be rolled back and leave her a bride,
Or sepulchered heart show where love long since
died?



The Burial of a Rose

I HAVE laid thee away in a grave, my sweet Rose,
And thy shroud is the incense of prayer.
There's a heart that must break as the crushed
petals close
In a grave that is emptied of care.

I have loved thee in life, and in death my love grows
But in loneliness faith must endure;
Yet I share in the Heaven that shelters my Rose
As I dream that thy peace is secure.

I am broken and crushed as I view the lone bough
Where in life thou did'st nestle and cling;
But I know thou art richer and happier now
Though the heart that remains cease to sing.

Then lie in the grave wrapped in holiest prayer,
That whoever thy resting-place view,
May find in my prayer like an epitaph there,
How ties that are broken renew.

One's Afraid, the Other Dassent

SCENE of conflict our front stoop,
Neighbor's cat and our pup present,
Watchin' for a chance to swoop;
One's afraid, the other dassent.

Scene has shifted to a school
Teacher's eyes are always present.
Boys and gals would like to fool,
One's afraid, the other dassent.

Scene returns to our front stoop,
Neighbor's gal and our boy present,
Kisses they would like to scoop,
One's afraid, the other dassent.

Scene is one you can't excel,
Neighbor's gal and our boy present;
Each has somethin' sweet to tell,
One's afraid, the other dassent.

Granny figures in the scene,
Our boy's kids in mischief present,
Granny says, "Don't whip 'em, Jean!"
Mum's afraid, and Daddy dassent.

The Making of a Man

TO make a man, or break a man,
Two methods seem essential.
To prove a man, and move a man,
These two are all potential.

To be a man, and see a man
In perfect revelation,
God has a plan that tests the man,
To find his valuation.

'T is sorrow breaks or sorrow makes
A heart of obduration;
And added care makes men to dare,
Or leads to desperation.

To make a man, not break a man,
Is all that life intended.
God picks the man to aid His plan
Whom trial has commended.



When Yo' Quits de Strugglin'

BLESS yo', honey! How de do?
 Let me look yo' through an' through,
 Seems lak ol' times come back sure,
 Stan'in' thar so sweet and pure.
 How 's yo' fam'ly? How 's yo' ma?
 How 's young Missis? How 's yo' pa?
 Ain't it scrumptious to be growed?
 Frocks don' fit dat I once sewed!

Sit down, do, and let me know
 All de news. Now, how 's yo' beau?
 Specs yo 's married years and years,
 Sunshine mixin' wif yo' tears,
 Babies comin'; troubles too;
 Ain't it heaben?—Git down daih, Sue!—
 Yes, dis married life am fine,
 See dem chilluns? Dey 's all mine.

Goodness, no! Yo' don' say so?
 Nevah married! whaih 's dat beau?
 Lak to tell dat man my min'!
 Guess dat ol' fool must be blin'
 Anyhow yo 's got no cares:
 Some folks don' look well in pairs,
 Single life dey say 's de bes',
 When yo' quits de strugglin'. Yes.

I Love Him

I LOVE Him, oh! I love Him,
This Man of Galilee,
He called me and I followed,
And now He's calling thee.

I love Him, yea, I love Him.
Yet never knew till now,
That all the sins I cherished
Were thorns in His fair brow.

I love Him, friend, I love Him,
This Man of Calvary.
My broken heart he treasured
In dark Gethsemane.

I love Him. Wilt *thou* love Him,
And perfect make my view?
For incomplete is Heaven
Unless I bring thee, too.

He loves me, and He loves thee.
Can sweeter joy be known?
Like angels in His Heaven,
We are His very own.

Mother's Stories

GIFT the rarest, mother dearest,
Sweetest gift was thine.
Purest worship gave we nightly
At thy fireside shrine.
Never were such deeds heroic,
Never truer men;
Never fairer women, dear heart,
Lived and loved than then.

Nothing moved us like those stories,
Nothing all these years.
Each a heart-throb, each a picture
Framed in smiles and tears.
Days have shaded into seasons,
Life has had its night,
But no joys like these have tarried
Till the sunset's light.

Twilight lurking; great logs burning;
Voices soft and low:
Faces rimmed in darkness, turning
To the firelight's glow.
Father holding baby brother,
Children huddled 'round,
Every eye transfixed on mother;
Oh, the hearts that bound!

Every flame that flickered softly
Was an elfish gleam.

Every log that crackled fiercely
Was some goblin's scream.
What romancing, and what building
Castles in the air!
Was there ever such a mother?
Ever queen so fair?

How we held our breath when danger
Threatened heroes dear.
How our eyes grew soft and misty
Through the lurking tear.
And the merry laughter ringing,
When the story told
Of some youngster's well-earned trouncing,
Being overbold.

But the best of all the stories
Were of simple deeds
Done by those who suffered always
For another's needs.
And the wicked men and women,
Much had they to rue,
When our little fists would tighten
Till they passed from view.

Kings and queens and fairies trooping
All about the room.
Eyes so big they look like specters
In the twilight's gloom.
Grave suspense to know the ending
Of each tale that's told.

A G A R L A N D O F V E R S E

Mother's voice with thrilling pathos
Melting hearts grown cold.

Just another story, mother!
Ever thus we said.
Just another, please, dear mother,
Then we 'll go to bed.
Ah! at last the story 's ended!
Pleasure's golden lease
In our childish fancy always,
Had no right to cease.

How the years slip by and make us
Men and women fast!
And we gather 'round the hearthstone
As in childhood's past.
But to her the sweetest stories
That the children told,
Were the scenes in which she reveled
When her hair was gold.

Lower burn the fireside embers;
Time has turned as gray
As the ashes that fall yonder
At the close of day.
Twilight's shadows, length'ning softly,
Crown a mother's head,
As she thinks of children sleeping
In the grave's deep bed.

Companionship

TO give that true companionship
Which a struggling brother needs,
And cement two souls in friendship,
Take an interest in his deeds.

Enter into his ambitions,
In his plans and hopes as well;
Just be patient with conditions;
These are what he aims to quell.

Put yourself in his place, brother,
And as ill be understood,
Then your thought for one another
Will react on both for good.

For the cause of alienation
Between those who would be friends,
Is the want of toleration
For the thing the heart commends.



The Quest

FACE after face, and still I seek
The face I may not find—
The brave, the strong, the proud, the weak—
Yet none with love inclined.

My eyes grow weary in the search.
The haunts of men repel.
I peer in hovel, house and church;
E'en to the doors of Hell.

I walk by day; I roam by night;
Yet conscious there is one
Who seeks me as by Heavenly right
To say, "Thy search be done."

I walk so close to men who pass,
I read their inmost thought.
Eye sees in eye as in a glass,
How dearly life is bought.

In crowded streets the human waste
Goes rushing madly on,
Nor stops to notice in its haste
If I be rose or thorn.

I note the few with greetings slight
Who signal back to me,
More like dumb ships that pass at night
Across a human sea.

A G A R L A N D O F V E R S E

And few there be who bearings take,
From star or sun on high;
Unwilling eyes the earth forsake,
When worlds of men pass by.

Face after face—unending stream—
In joyless search of life,
Until the mad'ning course would seem
One hopeless, soul-spent strife.

And keener than assassin's blade
The lustful eyes of men
Do beauty's sphere so foul invade,
No virtue stirs again.

Face after face; ah, well to know
Love's searching is divine.
The Holy Quest on which men go,
Shall cease when souls entwine.

Oh, for the face that smiling back
In holy night or noon,
Shall bid faith claim it—nothing lack—
When spirits sweet commune.

Face after face, and still I seek
The face that seeketh mine.
To this strange task I fain would keep
Till love to me incline.

The Med'cine Man

WE don' want nothin' 't all today.
 Hey? How's dat, man? What's
 dat you say?
 You see dat do'? Well, look a-hyeah!
 You shet it on de outside daih!
 Don' you come 'sultin' me no mo'.
 Because I 's black, you need n't ro'.
 Jes' take yo' traps an' move on quick,
 An' sell yo' stuff whaih folks is sick.

I tol' you once; aint dat enough?
 I don' want none yo' med'cine stuff.
 Does I look sick? You sho' aint right.
 Nex' t'ing you knows daih 'll be a fight,
 An' den you 'll need yo' patent cure
 To bring you to; dat 's suttain sho'.
 So lift yo' feet, an' sashay, coon,
 An' sing somebody else dat chune.

My sakes alive! Jes' hyeah dat man!
 Caint you stop talkin'? Goodness lan'!
 Now ef you makes me burn dem pies
 I 'll lak as not shet bof yo' eyes.
 Don' make no mo' rema'ks lak dat!
 Don' daih to call me Aunty Fat!—
 You say it 's jes' de med'cine's name?
 Reduces weight? Dat 's fat folks' shame?

A GARLAND OF VERSE

Oh, dat 's it, is it? Goodness me!
You wants to make me slim; I see.
Well let me tell you somp'n, man,
My han's aint stuck in dis dough-pan.
W'en de blessed Lawd made some folks fat
He warn'd 'em 'gainst fool-stuff lak dat.
Says He: "Dey 'll need daih strength fo' sho'
To shove some med'cine man through dat do'!"



He Hath Provision Made

SAY not complacently, the good Lord *will*
provide,
But rather say He *has*. For this blest truth
prepares
Our faith so nobly with our works to coincide,
That idleness in God's great bounty never
shares.

The promise sweet, to toilers only is fulfilled.
Unceasingly we may pray on, but 't is not
well;
For where our fields so opportune lie all untilled,
We shall in need go curst 'midst plenty,
where we dwell.

Dreaming

I AM dreaming, dreaming, dreaming
Of a pair of eyes whose gleaming
In the twilight sets me teeming
With a love I can't deny.

'T is a pair of eyes whose teasing
Is most wonderfully pleasing,
And their coquetry unceasing
Would a lover justify.

Just a pair of eyes whose beaming
Makes the world worth while redeeming
When I think of them esteeming
Such a worthless rogue as I.

Let me keep on dreaming, dreaming
Of those eyes with love a-gleaming
Till I lose myself in seeming
Theirs alone to satisfy.



My Little Cloud-Angel

I 'VE a little Cloud-Angel afloat in the air.
He 's a fine, manly fellow, and free from all
care.

With a shimmering fleece of a cloud for his gown,
The brilliance of opal he wears for a crown.
The sun is his anvil, on which there is wrought,
In the softest of textures, his beams of bright
thought.

With a smile so infectious, he garlands my way,
Till I live in a rhythm of song all the day.
By the tenderest sense he discerns in my heart
All my changes of mood with his silver-tipped
dart.

Like a breath he is gone if I whisper of fear,
And fail to remember his "Be of good cheer."
Then that little white cloud softly slips out of view
And he mockingly bids me a solemn adieu.
And I find quite disturbing the dark where once
shone

My little Cloud-Angel so fair on his throne.
Through the vanishing quivers of light he cries
out:

"No linings of silver have clouds if you doubt."

The Primrose and the Oak

A PRIMROSE by an oak-tree grew,
And drooped its modest head.
But seldom would the passerby
Locate its mossy bed,
Or pause to find the reason for
The gentle life it led.

The oak-tree spurned its lowly friend,
And shook its leafy mane,
And gave the rose no thought or care
Through days of sun and rain.
The primrose loved the sturdy oak,
And never suffered pain.

It minded not that men passed by
In their simplicity,
And saw it not, yet ever spoke
About the giant tree.
It felt a greater fondness for
The strength that all men see.

Yet every day it fairer grew,
And stronger grew the tree.
And both a silent joy possessed
In unharmed liberty.
And when soft winds the boughs would
part,
The rose, the sun would see.

A G A R L A N D O F V E R S E

And seeing, every petal blushed,
And fragrance dropped around,
With beauteous service to the tree
That stood on hallowed ground.
And yet the stern oak never knew
What joys in love abound.

I wandered to the tree one day—
The primrose serving still,
In sweet devotion at its feet,
I felt love's mystic thrill—
And stooping, raised its sunlit head
To test its gentle will.

It seemed to know for what I came.
It had no fear of me;
And gave me friendly confidence
In willing speech and free;
And shared with me the kingly court
It rendered to the tree.

“I once was held a prisoner,
And in the darkest cell,
No sunbeam ever came to cheer,
Nor sighing wind to tell
How much of beauty life possessed,
And where its secrets dwell.

A G A R L A N D O F V E R S E

**"Beneath the sodden earth I lived,
Where all was dull and still,
And where the walls of my dark home
Were ever damp and chill.
And nothing seemed so right as gloom
My prison-cell to fill.**

**"And oft rebellious, I refused
The cup of joy that came
Distilling through my earth-clogged roof
My confidence to claim.
Till one day, I beheld a worm
Grove blindly, as for shame.**

**"At first I liked it not, and then,
As I observed its way,
It seemed to labor with content;
And patient, day by day,
It loosened up the heavy thongs
That bound me tight in clay.**

**"Its service came so willingly,
I set about to do
Some useful thing myself, and lo!
A strange sensation through
My entire being seemed to thrill,
And life began anew.**

"An impulse never felt before
Assured me I was meant
To see the sun, and that it, too,
From Heaven to me was sent.
That what I needed most, I had;
And using, brought content.

"And thus with gentle grace I grew
In cheerful faith, at last,
Till one sweet day, the sun declared
My prison-days were past.
My grateful heart resolved to serve
Where'er my lot was cast.

"And every simple joy was mine
That life could well bestow.
The night was nothing more to me
Than moonbeam's mellow glow.
Its festooned glories were the stars.
The clouds, its quilt of snow.

"I watched the silent men who passed
In sullen discontent,
Who knew not Nature's solaced moods,
Nor what sweet service meant.
These only saw imprisoned clay,
Instead of God's blue tent.

"In vain I offered them my cheer;
But like the oak, they spurned.
The cooling velvet of my cheek,
No fevered trav'ler learned.
The sun that wrought my pallid tints,
For them had only burned.

"The forest's riches and the fields'
Lay bounteous at their feet.
The splendors that a king might own
No prodigal would greet.
The sunset's witchery was lost,
The bird's song incomplete.

"And somewhere in God's world, the green
Turned smiling into brown;
While they who strove to win a wreath
Still wore disturbing frown,
And joy of service never knew,
Nor grace of kingly crown."

A primrose by an oak-tree grew
Upon a mossy bed,
And taught its faithful lesson till
The tree and flower were wed.
The oak-tree kept a stately guard
Until the rose was dead.

When a Woman's Sewin'

THERE ain't nothin' seems more
soothin'

Than to watch a woman sew,
An' to see things git together
That are cut so queer, you know,
That it keeps you kind o' guessin'
How the durned things fit jest so.

When Maria gits to sewin',
An' there's nothin' much to do
But to sit around and gossip,
An' to tell her all that's new—
There ain't nothin' quite so soothin'
In this world, I promise you,

As to see that woman sewin'
An' to hear them scissors snip,
Or the clickin' of the thimble,
Or the dry-goods as they rip;
An' her strugglin' with the needle
When the eye gives her the slip.

An' a woman when she's sewin'
Shows her disposition, too;
Ef she's mad, jest hear them scissors
How they go a-snippin' through.
An' she takes the goods an' rips 'em,
Most a-wishin' it was you!

She kin sew a trifle faster
When her feelin's has been hurt;
An' the answers that she gives you
Mebbe seem a little curt;
But her tongue don't need no urgin'
When her sewin' takes a spurt!

I kin tell when trouble's brewin'
By the breakin' of the thread.
That's the time I usually reckon
That I better go to bed.
It ain't wise fer me to foller
Up the thing that I jest said.

But there's one thing that I've noticed
'Bout this sewin' business, too,
Ef the conversation's pers'nal,
An' the mendin' is fer you,
That her sewin' 's like her talkin',
She keeps on untel she's through!



Oh, Heart of Mine

OH, heart of mine, and heart of thine,
Between us, what a wooing!
Oh, love divine, in human shrine,
Thou art the world's undoing!

Oh, white of heat, and passion's beat,
Unconquerable seducer!
Thou art the sweet, unholy cheat,
And infinite traducer!

Yet let me die, if thou deny
My pains and pleasures ever;
A lover I, to gratify,
Forever and forever!



Kissin'

GEE! Don't it make you sick to see
Fellers kissin' girls so free.
There's one thing appeals to me,
It's fellers showin' dignity.

Hully Gee! You don't mean me?
Will I do it? Wait and see!
Kissin'? Well, you must agree
It depends on more than me.

The Lie

Written upon the occasion of the rendering of the verdict of the Coroner's jury in New York City, August, Nineteen Hundred Seven, in the case of the young girl who shot and killed her father, a hardened criminal, who had attacked and fatally shot her hard-working, faithful mother. The jury's verdict was that the father had come to his death as the result of a bullet wound from a pistol in the hand of a person or persons unknown. Yet the girl had heroically testified that she was responsible for his death, having shot to kill to save her mother's life. She discharged five bullets at the man, holding her wounded mother in her arms, while the man kept up a running fire upon her. Though technically guilty of murder, the jury refused to render a verdict according to the evidence, and the girl went free.

THERE is one lie, and only one,
 That need not be confessed;
 That bears the searching of the sun,
 And by the Truth is blessed.
 It is that lie calm courage speaks
 If woman's honor needs.
 It is that lie her good name seeks,
 And through dishonor pleads.

So ruled twelve men that summer day
 When one lone woman stood
 And heard twelve men in judgment say
 Her blood-stained deed was good.
 And twelve men fearlessly could lie,
 And say they did not know
 The hand that shot to kill; nor why
 That deed of blood was so.

Within her brave, frail arms she held
Her mother's dying form,
And faced a demon till she felled
Him with her bullets' storm.
Then calmly said, "I shot to kill—
My mother's life to save"—
And through the court's gray room so still,
Twelve men their verdict gave.

Twelve hearts on fair Manhattan's Isle
Forgot the laws of men,
And only cared that Freedom's smile
Should be her right again.
And they forgot that they were men,
And wept as brave hearts may
To see those blood-stained hands, again
Go free in God's sweet day.

And never seemed the sun more fair,
Nor tears such sacred things,
As when that girl's white face of care
Was touched by angels' wings.
The sacred hush of Heaven crept
About those walls of gray
Where Judgment sat, while Justice wept
For womanhood that day.

There is one lie, and only one,
 That need not be confessed;
 That bears the searching of the sun;
 And Truth is not more blessed.
 It is that lie calm courage speaks
 If woman's honor needs.
 It is that lie her good name seeks,
 And through her shame still pleads.



My Burdens

THREE kinds of burdens do I bear
 Of different weight and measure,
 But one of these 't were wrong to share
 With friends I love and treasure.

Sufficient strength is granted me
 To bear this grief alone;
 But one still greater in degree
 About my soul has grown.

Though this woe, too, I needs must bear,
 Still may I pray another
 With me this deeper grief to share,
 And be my elder brother.

There is a woe no human friend
 Can ease, though long I tarry;
 My God alone can comprehend
 The sorrow that I carry.

His Story

THIS is the story I heard him tell.
Perhaps you have heard its parallel.
I give it to you as 't was given me,
Out of a heart full of sympathy.

I lived on a farm where the birds were my friends
In an intimate way that a boy comprehends,
Possessing in common the valleys' loved view,
The trees and flowers 'neath the sky's tent of blue.

One day some wild geese flew across the old farm,
And circled content, seeing naught to alarm,
When the crack of a rifle the affrighted flock stirred,
And there fell at my feet a broken-winged bird.

I lifted it, kissed it, and bore it away,
Determined to nurse it to strength through the day.
In helpless confusion its soft downy wing
Dropped over my arm as I fondled the thing.

I felt that it trusted me, watching me try
To fix its limp wing that again it might fly;
And soon it was well; but I wondered in fear
If it might be unhappy, its friends nowhere near.

Then I taught it some tricks; to hop o'er my shoë,
And turn somersaults, and a dozen things do,
That seemed very queer for a bird, I must say,
But it seemed to be grateful in its own quiet way.

A G A R L A N D O F V E R S E

One day when the air was as sharp and as clear
As winter days can be and still not be here,
A flock of wild geese flew across the old farm,
And for once I was tempted to do them some harm.

I rushed to the house calling loud for my gun,
When father said sharply, "Don't shoot, my son!"
But the crack of a shot rent the clear, cold air,
And I felt the white wing of a bird 'side me there.

It lay there so still, and its velvety eye
Looked at me in sorrow, regretting to die.
It begged so for pity in a last gasp for breath,
That I felt it reproach me in the silence of death.

I had killed my own bird, my own little friend!
Yet how often may sport have tragedy's end.
What anguish can come so deep and so great
As when we remember and sorrow too late?

The loss of a friend! and a loss we create!
Is there any woe deeper this side Heaven's gate?
To be tender of hearts as well as of birds
Was the pledge made that day in unspoken words.



The Price

Ⓟ GOD! A beggar at Thy door.
He knocks, who never knocked
before.
His costly garb belies his caste.
The gold his trembling hands hold fast,
Is not his present quest.
He comes reluctant. Bound by pride,
He brushed in scorn Thy hand aside
These long, long years; till all his hoard
Made him of men a mighty lord;
But now he begs for rest.

For rest! O God, didst Thou discern
The ill content, the torment burn
His soul until its ashes fell
So fast they walled him in a hell
Of terror. Then he prayed.
Within his house of cindered dreams,
Friends answered not his thrilling screams;
For these were busy counting gold
That he had paid for love they sold
To him in shameful trade.

And then he begged for one last sip
Of wasted joy. His parched lip
In vain besought the soothing draught;
Whilst mem'ry fiendishly laughed,
And clinked his mocking gold.

His shrunken soul, a new-found fear,
Hissed in his too-unwilling ear:
"The only thing that filled thy day,
Thou craven, was this yellow clay.
All else was dead and cold."

And then? Ah, God! 't was then he came
To this last door in heedless shame,
And proffered Thee his golden store
If Thou to him wouldst grant once more
The sense of joy's sweet taste.
Thy answer? God! how it hath left
An empty void still more bereft!
"I ask a price no fool can pay.
Thy soul, O man! What hast to say?"
"My soul? I thought it waste."

"May I not buy my way to Thee?
I bought all else that came to me.
I traded well. My measured gain
Was twice and thrice the cost. Nor vain
Was e'er my golden quest.
Behold my wealth. I own these lands,
These mighty ships, these iron bands.
I yield them all; but grant me this,
To know my youth's discerning bliss
Of star-eyed joy and rest."

"With such a price, though, couldst not buy
The smallest atom of the sky.
Nor trade again thy hoarded store
For priceless pearl from Heaven's shore
Thy youth so willing lost."

Thou art more beggared by thy gold.
Naught purchased thou, yet all things sold.
I ask a price. How wilt thou pay?
Thy soul I seek; not this dull clay;
What knowest thou of cost?"

A beggar still outside Thy door,
He hides his useless, yellow store.
His costly robe slips down in haste;
A shriveled heart reveals the waste
Of what was once his quest.
He comes with tears and loosened pride;
He takes Thy hand once brushed aside;
He calls Thee friend. His plea is heard.
Admitted by Thy promised word,
He stands an honored guest.



When He Calls Me

WILL he pass my window ever?
Will he sometimes think of me?
Will he know that friends who sever
Heart-ties, are not always free?

Fadeless memory! How it lingers,
Till my longing eyes grow wet;
And in love my trembling fingers
Smooth again his locks of jet.

Oh, the picture that is left me
Of a face so strong and white,
That it seems to have bereft me
Of my saner self tonight!

I do quite forget his error.
Other days claim all my thought;
Days in which there was no terror
Of the thing that he had wrought.

Now come trooping home those pleasures
Which together claimed our time.
Counting out in happy measures
Life's sweet song in joyous rhyme.

They are gone, and he has followed;
But they leave no wound to smart.
Not so him, for he has hollowed
Out a grave within my heart.

A GARLAND OF VERSE

Does he know a friend lies weeping
When the silent watches come
In the night, where love is keeping
Guard o'er dead hopes till it's numb?

In that cleft where heart is riven
Lies my sweet one dead tonight.
And with prayers my soul has striven
To forget and heal the blight.

Grant, O God, that it may be so,
And in fondness let me see
Through the darkness the bright halo
That love crowned him with for me.

When he calls, oh, may I hasten
Then to answer, "Come to me."
Let my sorrow heaven chasten
That his sin may cease to be.



My Lord and I

I PAID the rent these many faithful years.
 The house was costly to my purse.
 The price was of a kind that oft endears
 The tenant to his lease so terse.
 I rendered all unstintingly, nor sought
 A longer time than was allowed.
 I paid with coin that might have ransoms bought,
 Or crowns for kingly heads unbowed.

But when I bid adieu, I turn the key,
 And leave the house a useless clod.
 No other tenant views it fittingly;
 It seems a menace to the sod.
 Nor does the Landlord miss my rent of gold.
 He wrecks the walls that shelter me,
 And leaves them rot into the common mold—
 The realm of his vast property.

Yet ofttimes His demands seemed harassing
 As I review the tenant's cares.
 The call to pay would come embarrassing
 When I could ill comport my wares.
 And yet the ceaseless prodding ever blessed;
 And soon a finer kind of gold
 Became the currency for which He pressed,
 While ever tighter grew His hold.

A G A R L A N D O F V E R S E

At times I questioned of His right to tax;
His answer was an empty hand.
And never had His seeking seemed less lax
Than when I parried His demand.
And once I fought against His tyranny,
And threatened to destroy His house;
But nothing ever stirred His enmity,
And nothing could His anger rouse.

“Thou may'st destroy the house, but what avails?
The tenant, loath to keep it, never dies.
The very power thy guilty hand assails
Is but thine own that in it fearless lies.
Blame not the house for what the tenant does.
Dishonor can not come to human clay.
Though blind, unthinking men do murder thus,
The tenant still goes on his unwished way.

“If fittingly thou keep'st this house of clay,
To loftier place shalt thou exalted be.
And when from paths of life thy feet would stray,
Remember this, I still have claim on thee.
Thy tenancy unsought will not be run
So long as I am Lord and thou art man.
Keep well thy house till with it I am done,
Then shalt thou hap'ly share my household's
plan.”

The Daffodil to the Rose

WITH sweet regrets
Thy vision frets
My inner soul's soft dreaming.
In happier hours
Within love's bowers
Life's jeweled hopes lay gleaming.

No thought of self,
Or worldly pelf,
Love fell in rapturous showers.
I yielded all
Beyond recall.
Fate's highway teemed with flowers.

Time flew apace
And swift the race
'Twixt youth and passion's wooing.
A red rose still,
A daffodil.
How fierce the heart's renewing!

Deep scarlet line,
Sad green repine;
O God! How fast some flowers wither!
Just by a breath,
Then to their death.
No rose? Why then, I'll like the heather.

Le Coeur Brise

ALL things broken, here are mended,
Good as new." Thus the words ran
On the old sign that, suspended,
Creaked a dirge as old signs can.

Fair-haired maiden, eyes where love was,
Looks and reads, and steps within.
"Can you mend the wrong that love does?
Wipe away the stain of sin?"

Gray-haired woman, eyes where love was,
Sits beside her broken toys,
Gently toils as woman 'lone does,
When her life 's devoid of joys.

Eyes of maiden search the woman,
"Am I right in hoping here
There is yet some love that 's human
To revive a life that 's drear?"

Eyes of woman, eyes of maiden,
Meet and read by subtle art:
"When one mars the joys of Eden,
There 's no hope for broken heart."

The Sunset

BEHOLD the drapery of the night!
 A fleecy flame 'midst opal light.
 An etching limned with shafts of gold,
 That twilight's alchemy unrolled.
 Swift-changing vista of the West,
 To couch a day that slips to rest.
 The sun-kissed pipes of glory fade,
 As music of the skies is played;
 While evening-star hangs lone and wan,
 In russet dusk, where shadows dawn.
 Oh, wondrous eye that sees the night
 And sees it best in sunset's light!
 Oh, wondrous eye that sees the day,
 And finds it best in slanting ray!
 What prayers to read the day aright
 Yet find no message in the night!

So ends my day, my life of love,
 Whose silver cords reach Heaven above,
 And hold within time's golden bowl,
 The nameless passion of my soul.
 Some call me grief, more call me joy.
 Could rainbows in a tear annoy?
 I know not which was best for me
 The heat of noon, or twilight's glee.
 But this I know, and night acclaims,
 No day's complete lest love remains,
 Oh, lustrous eye that sees the night!
 I wonder have I read aright;

And if thine eye that sees the day
 Hath found love's meaning in my way?
 Behold the drapery of the night,
 When love's sweet day hath ta'en its flight!



A Fixed Principle

W'EN Dinah heard dat Henry Day
 Was callin' on Miss Phoebe Clay,
 She walked herself right ovah sho'
 An' rapped upon de kitchen do'.
 "I hyeahs," says she, "dat you has tried
 To 'tice my Henry from my side.
 I wants yo' 'stinctly understan',
 Dat man has asked me fo' my han'!"

"Is yo' talkin' 'bout dat coachman, Miss,
 Who's cou'tin' first dat one, den dis?
 Ef yo' is, I wants to speak out plain
 Befo' yo' goes and change yo' name.
 I has de weakness of my sex,
 But gives you dis, my Gospel tex',
 De man I marries, Dinah Wade,
 Won' be no hoss's chambermaid!"

Ecstasy

I DREAM! How sweet to me the sense
Of new creations hov'ring round,
When musings drive this mortal hence,
And leave me naught of earthly sound.

I live! What ecstasy in life!
When trappings fall and shackles slip;
Where once was wasting, mad'ning strife,
Kissed into calm by lover's lip.

I love! Oh, speechless, godlike bliss!
To feel the warmth of human breath,
And know a love that stirs like this,
Nor wanes in life, nor pales in death.



Common

THEY said he was common; yet so is the clay.
The fairest of settings is dust of decay.
And everything worthy is mothered of earth;
And greatness is honored by what gives it birth.

They said he was common; for which God be
praised,
Who out of the vulgar His noblest has raised.
For the commonest thing that man apprehends,
Is the worthiest thing that God recommends.

My Prayer

GOD grant unto me
Sweet favor and grace,
As I read Thy word,
And behold Thy face.

Make my trust more real,
And my words more kind,
And my hands to help,
And my eyes less blind.

Make my heart grow warm,
And my face to shine,
As I talk to men
Of Thy love divine.



Recompense

RAIN, rain, rain; disappointing rain.
Drench the people, slap their faces,
Life-distilling rain!

Pain, pain, pain; disciplining pain.
Wrenching people, blanching faces,
Soul-transforming pain!

Gain, gain, gain; both the rain and pain.
Beautifying, sanctifying
Angels, rain and pain!

The Doll

OH, the love so lavish
Spent upon thee, doll!
Less my heart would ravish,
Favored little doll!

I perhaps am jealous,
Pretty little doll,
Of a love so zealous
For a heartless doll.

See! my lady's weeping
For a broken doll;
Yet my eyes are speaking,
"Love me like your doll."

'T is a woman playing
With love's pretty doll;
'T is a man's betraying
Leaves a broken doll.



Genesis

I AM the keeper of a Paradise
 More beautiful than Eden, and 't is mine.
 'T was not my task to plan its setting fair,
 Nor yet to say what best would thrive therein:
 I only knew 't was mine; and it seemed right
 That I should set about to make it bloom,
 And furnish sweetest joys for passersby,
 That these might catch its fragrance and be moved
 To modest purpose by its well-kept plan.
 My labors all to love could well be turned
 By studied knowledge of its serving worth.
 And when I planted seeds, behold! I found
 They turned to thoughts and these again to deeds,
 That blossomed into life so fair, that men
 Seemed better for the loitering steps they took,
 Pausing to note the silent processes.
 And ever it seemed fairest when I strove
 To make it worthy of some other's glance.

And yet withal an incompleteness marred;
 For oft I noticed that with careless tread
 I moved among my garden's wealth of bloom
 Where pressed the need of still a softer hand
 To twine the petals rare I heedless passed.
 The sacred knowledge of some missing part,
 In night's deep stillness, would reveal a face
 That knew me well, and spoke familiarly:

A G A R L A N D O F V E R S E

"I am thy finished self, that makes complete
Thy furnished way. Apart from me thy work
Must ever be undone and suffer loss.
I am thy comrade, friend. I seek no end
But this, to serve thee and to bring thee life."
And thus I knew that we were one for aye.

She showed me where my garden's gate was hid
Beneath the shrubbery of sweet neglect.
And taught me where emotion's entrance lay—
'T was through the heart, the sunny Southern
gate—

While I had kept the Northward entrance free.
For thought could only come by such a way;
And thought was cold; but love was warm and
kind.

And then she showed me the eternal stream
Of passion that coursed my garden through; where
Upon its banks grew every favored tree
That flowered into life's most luscious joys.
And then with gentle hand and face of calm,
Led me to the sea that laved the shore
Of my earth's home, and I beheld its tide.

" 'Twixt God and man the Sea of Sorrow rolls,
And none may reach Him till that sea is crossed.
And never mariner may move his barque
Beyond the harbor of his pent-up self,
Until he fashion first enduring mast,
And on its pallid cross nail every joy."

A G A R L A N D O F V E R S E

And then in love she showed me death's white face,
And bade me not to fear, but win its smile;
For smile it could, but only when its face
Was turned towards God. 'T was then a sunset's
glow.

I could but ask: "How long shall life so sweet
Its garden's beauty keep, and stay awhile
Within the gates that must eternal close?"
And thus she spake: "Till you and I have seen
The precious seed of love renew itself,
And serve as gard'ner when our day is spent.
Each seed must be on holy service bent;
For idle purpose is the serpent's trail
That through the garden if it once shall move,
Will blight each bud and reap the harvest, Death
Himself alone should claim, when time is done."

Across the garden fell the gladdening sun.
It nourished every gentle thing that grew;
And most of all it gathered up the dew
From God's great Sea of Pain and sent it free;
And every tree and vine and bud dropped tears;
But each was better for the thing endured.
And when the glories of the night passed through,
There came sweet rest. And every bitter blight
Was vanquished when the morning sun returned.

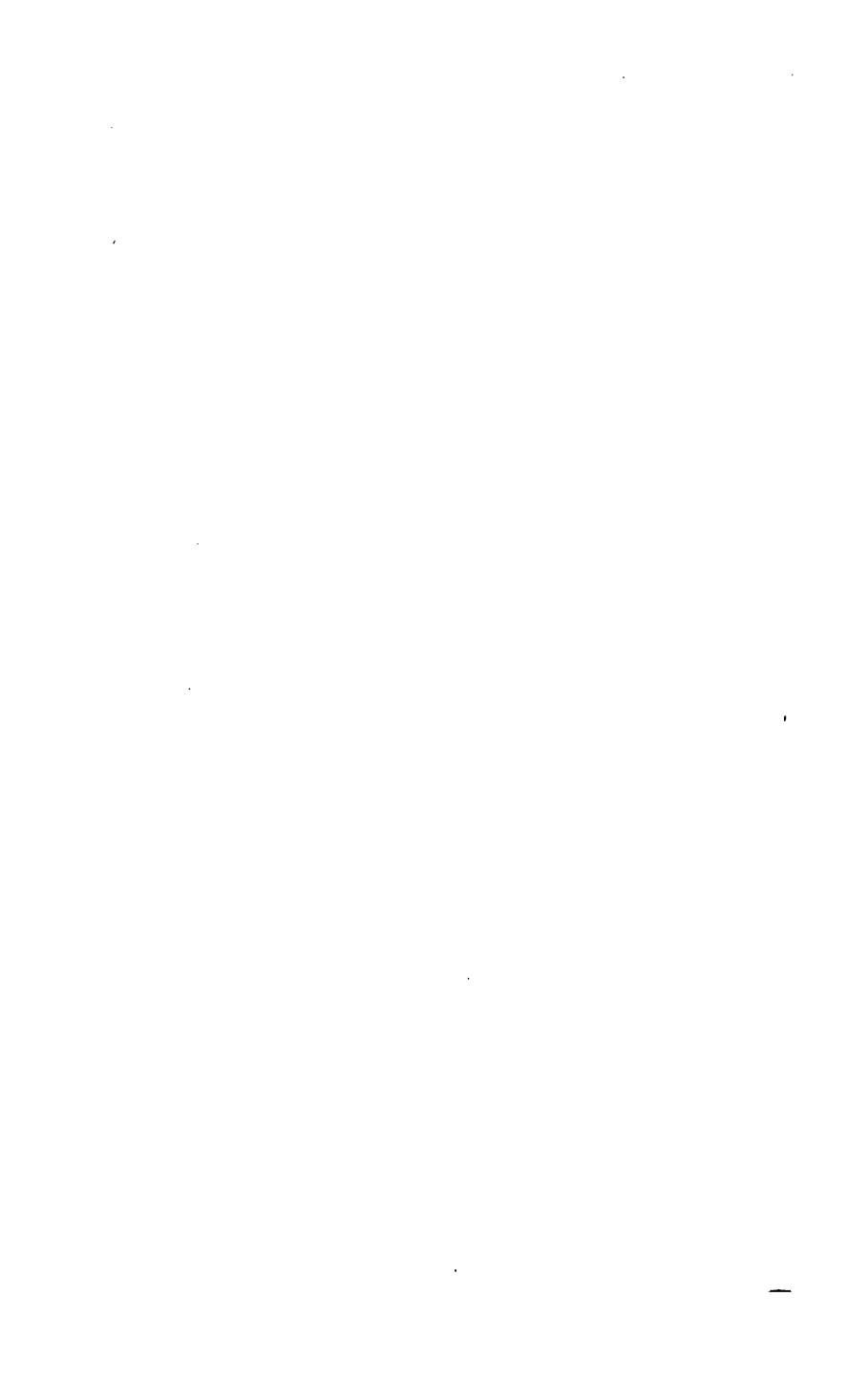
A G A R L A N D O F V E R S E

And when disturbing footprints marred the beach,
God's sea in mercy laved the shore until
The record vanished, and healing zephyrs
Breathed one long benediction o'er the world.

Epilogue

Out of the mists that rise from the sea,
Two spirits wander unknowingly;
Floating away to the vast beyond,
Purposeless, aimless and vagabond.

Now where the mists rise out of the sea
Two spirits mingle in harmony;
Slipping away to a vast beyond,
Entering life in a holy bond.







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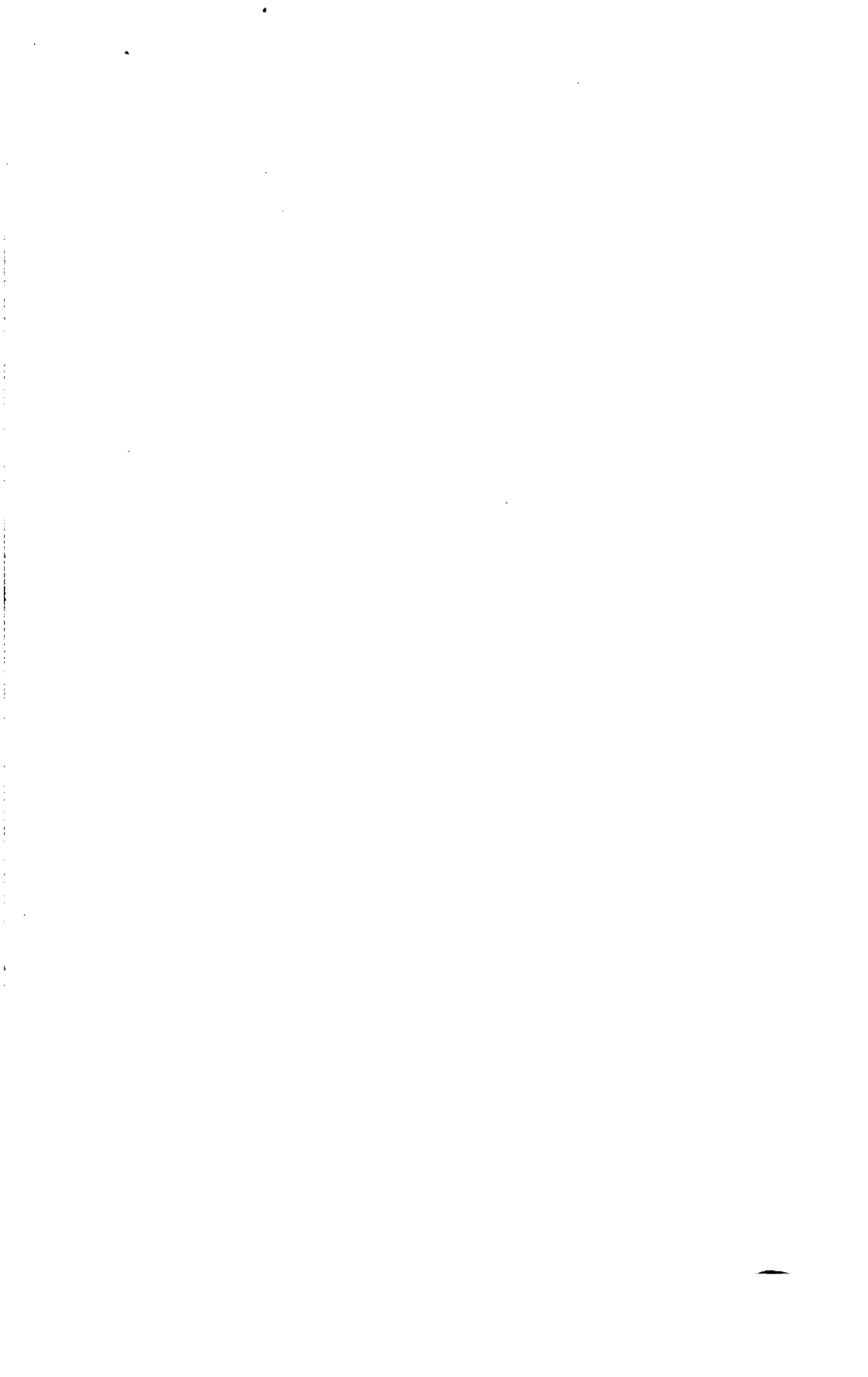
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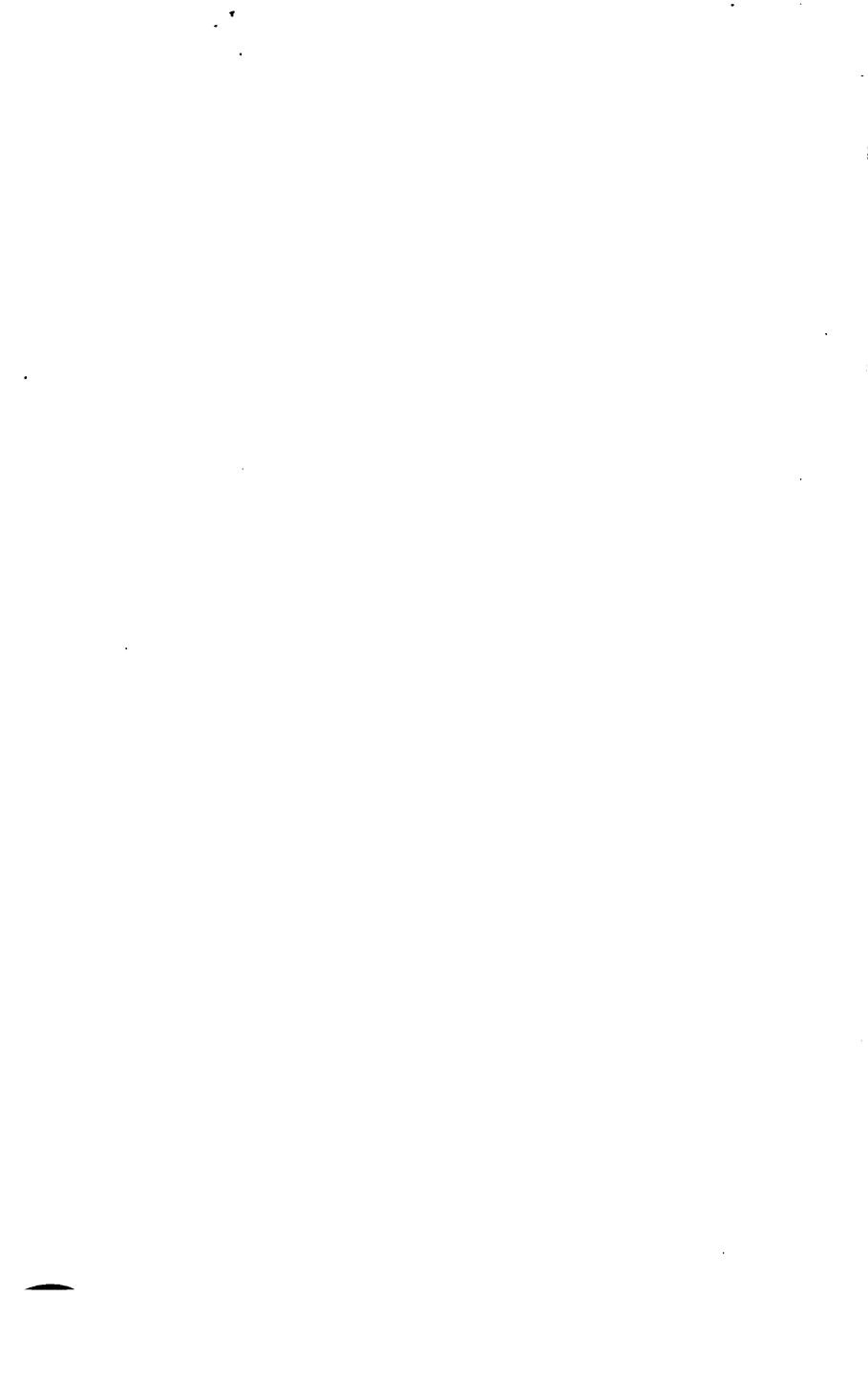
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